

Recommendations and Priorities

APPROACH

The Technical Assistance Team prepared draft reinvestment recommendations (presented in written and map form) summarizing the findings of the Asset Profile and the ideas from Focus Groups and visioning workshops which had received a high level of support. Cluster Board members and stakeholders reviewed and revised these draft reinvestment recommendations in two working sessions to. Each draft recommendation was discussed to clarify its intent and to propose revisions, if needed. Additional reinvestment recommendations were proposed. Participants then voted to determine whether there was significant support for the draft recommendation. Those recommendations which did not receive majority support were dropped from further consideration. Where there were strong differences of opinion, minority positions were discussed and recommendations were either revised or the minority opinion was recorded. Participants also selected the three draft reinvestment recommendations under each planning topic (Neighborhood Commercial, Housing, Job Centers, etc.) that they felt were most important to the future of the Cluster.

The results of these working sessions were summarized in brochure format for stakeholder review. At the stakeholder review meeting, Cluster Board members highlighted the types of reinvestment recommendations presented under each planning topic and those recommendations which had been proposed as priorities. Stakeholders were asked to review the brochure (including a color map of proposed reinvestment target areas) to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with (or were not sure about) each reinvestment recommendation. Stakeholders also indicated their top three priorities in each planning topic.

The results of the stakeholder review demonstrated that there was a high level of support for all of the reinvestment recommendations and that stakeholders endorsed the proposed priorities. All of the reinvestment recommendations were supported by 70% or more of the review responses; most reinvestment recommendations received 90% or better support.

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REINVESTMENT Cluster 10's reinvestment recommendations are presented below.
RECOMMENDATIONS Priority recommendations are shown in bold type.

Neighborhood Commercial

General

1. Encourage an increased diversity and improved quality of neighborhood-serving commercial uses (particularly grocery and specialty food stores, restaurants and entertainment uses, home/hardware stores) to capitalize on Cluster 10 neighborhoods with high median incomes and "capture" an increasing percentage of consumer expenditures within the Cluster and the City.
2. Promote a mix of commercial, multifamily (townhouse; low-rise apartments) residential and civic spaces in commercial areas/strips.
3. Increase the capacity of existing Cluster-based business development organizations to cooperate effectively to:
 - Document the buying power/unmet market potential of the Cluster in order to recruit investors
 - Work with the City to assemble land, obtain financing, capitalize on development incentives and reduce red tape to promote commercial reinvestment
 - Improve code enforcement in commercial areas and revise zoning regulations to require perimeter screening to improve the appearance of commercial strips
 - Expedite the transfer of city-owned vacant buildings to organizations who can re-use them productively
 - Assist in marketing commercial reinvestment locations/recruiting investors
 - Give Cluster stakeholders a strong voice in formulating/shaping commercial development plans/decisions for the area
 - Ensure that this business development coalition works with, and is governed by, Cluster residents and business owners and addresses both neighborhood commercial and job-related development issues/initiatives.

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Neighborhood Scale Commercial Development

4. Protect Cluster 10's strong residential character and stability by promoting reinvestment in existing "main street" style commercial areas to complement their pedestrian-oriented development character and strengthen their viability. Discourage the development of new suburban style shopping centers of more than 150,000 SF (15 acres).
5. Encourage reinvestment by smaller scale retail/service entrepreneurs by providing technical support and facilitating access to capital while also identifying appropriate locations for larger scale national chain and/or discount firms.
6. Build on areas of commercial strength by encouraging the consolidation neighborhood commercial uses in these target areas in the next 5 - 10 years.
 - Livernois between St. Martins and McNichols
 - McNichols opposite Marygrove and on selected blocks between Marygrove and Livernois
7. Create a revitalized smaller scale shopping center at Wyoming and 7 Mile

Cluster scale Commercial Development

8. Promote the development of a new larger-scale (up to 150,000 SF) shopping center to serve the residents of Clusters 10, 9 and 6 on Livernois at the Lodge. Locate and develop this commercial center:
 - to minimize the loss of good quality housing
 - to minimize disruption to residential neighborhoods
9. Formulate redevelopment strategies to promote appropriate new uses for those commercial strips which are not viable today and which are not identified as target reinvestment areas, for example:
 - Wyoming, north and south of the 7 Mile intersection
 - 8 Mile/Greenfield/Lodge
 - Puritan, Fenkell, Dexter and Linwood
 - McNichols from Wyoming to Livernois and from Livernois to Fairway

These areas should be redeveloped for:

- greenways and gateways
- multifamily residential development (townhouse format preferred)

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- off-street parking (with substantial landscaping) to support commercial concentrations
- small office parks/centers
- day care center, youth center and non-profit organization office locations

10. Create a major gateway to the City and the Cluster on Livernois at 8 Mile and the Lodge, and minor gateways at Schaefer, Meyers and Wyoming, with special landscaping, signage and lighting.

Housing

General

1. **Prioritize housing reinvestments to:**
 - **First, maintain the stability of intact neighborhoods where housing conditions are stable or showing signs of early decline and values are relatively high.**
 - **Second, reinforce ongoing initiatives for housing improvement that are showing signs of success.**
2. Give highest priority to providing housing attractive to middle and upper income households while also providing quality housing affordable to low and moderate income households.
3. **Expand the range of housing opportunities available in Cluster 10 to accommodate a variety of life stages – from senior housing, to first time home buyer, to households with children, to renter. Provide this expanded range of housing choice without compromising the integrity of existing neighborhoods by encouraging compatibility with existing architecture in new development and by:**
 - **including affordable rental and lower cost home purchase options across the area, as feasible, to foster a mix of incomes**
 - **providing higher density housing (townhouses, garden apartments) as part of the re-use strategy for commercial strips which will not be a target for neighborhood commercial reinvestment**
4. As new housing is developed, encourage a mix of rental and owner occupied housing (rather than concentrating rental units in a particular area) to promote neighborhood stability and a high level of property maintenance.

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5. Work to maintain high rates of owner occupancy in the Cluster and provide incentives for home purchase.
6. **Improve the quality of property maintenance and work with the City to define strategies for improving code enforcement. For example:**
 - Provide frequent code inspection of rental properties, with stakeholders working in partnership with code enforcement officials to identify and report code violations and monitor compliance progress
 - Assign specific code enforcement officers to serve the area possibly based at the Neighborhood City Hall)
 - Develop and implement strategies for reducing the number of absentee owned rental properties over time
 - Provide "home buyers club" training for first time home buyers to provide assistance in successful home maintenance and repair
 - Provide incentives and recognition for high quality property maintenance
7. Develop a more cooperative relationship and attitude between building inspectors and non-profits, developers and individuals undertaking housing improvement efforts (both rehab and new construction) to make inspection approval criteria explicit, apply those criteria consistently and streamline the inspection and approvals process.
8. Increase the availability of low-interest loans for housing maintenance/repair and rehab, including a review of appraisal criteria which limit loan amounts and deter reinvestment.
9. Work with the City to define consistent policies, and guidelines for their implementation, in making available city-owned parcels which are too small for infill development to abutting property owners at nominal cost.
10. Encourage City participation in the State program (Project SAVED) which transfers tax reverted properties directly to Cluster-based housing non-profits for rehab and re-sale at nominal cost. Also encourage the City to transfer city-owned surplus properties to qualified Cluster-based non-profits to facilitate planned infill housing development.

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11. Encourage the City to take the lead in defining strategies for increasing the number of qualified, reasonably priced contractors and housing developers interested in working in Detroit. For example by:
 - Streamlining City development approvals
 - Streamlining reimbursement from City-managed programs
12. Work with the Neighborhood Development Commission to identify alternatives to waiting for property to be abandoned and assembled (through tax reversion) by the City including the possibility of (1) offering owners in areas experiencing significant disinvestment an opportunity to trade their equity in their current home for a down payment on a better home in a better neighborhood and (2) allowing land (in areas of severe disinvestment) to be assembled and maintained by a cluster-based development organization until the timing is right for redevelopment.
13. Seek out organizations which could help to fill the special needs housing gaps in the area, especially additional housing for seniors, housing for first time home buyers and housing for very low income households. Develop strategies to build the capacity of those special needs housing organizations.
14. Work with the City to coordinate infrastructure investments (utility and street lighting upgrades, road and sidewalk improvements, park improvements, etc.) with housing investments in target areas.
15. Support programs to maintain stable neighborhoods throughout the Cluster. For example, by:

Locations

- Strengthening neighborhood organizations; community building activities (Clean Sweep/Spring Clean-up, community gardening/greening projects, parties/picnics, etc.)
- Spot demolition
- Low interest home repair and improvement loans
- Concentrated code enforcement activity
- Crime watch; community policing
- Infrastructure improvements (road paving, street lights, parks, etc.)

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16. Stabilize neighborhoods beginning to show early signs of disinvestment/decline:

- the area between 8 Mile and Pembroke from Santa Barbara and Livernois
- the Palmer Park apartment area
- Martin Park between Linwood and Fairfield, south of Grove and the area between Log Cabin and the City limits
- the area south of the Lodge between Linwood and Livernois

For example, by:

All of the strategies listed (in 15) above PLUS

- Strengthen non-profit housing development organizations
- Provide resources to support master planning and coordination among organizations
- Tax incentives (freeze or forgiveness on improvement value)
- Low interest rehab loans
- Home Buyers Club and low-interest mortgages
- Subsidies for housing rehab and infill/new construction
- Transfer of city-owned surplus properties to qualified non-profits

17. Reinforce and accelerate the success of planned and ongoing housing improvement efforts in the Pilgrim Village area (north of the Lodge and south of Puritan) including housing rehab, infill and new multifamily housing development.

Job Centers

General

1. Promote the creation of higher wage jobs in manufacturing, skilled trades and technology, as well as locally owned and operated small retail and service business start-ups.
2. **Establish a Cluster-based organization (or increase the capacity of a coalition) to work with the City to:**
 - assemble parcels for job-related reinvestment
 - provide development/investment incentives
 - facilitate access to financing
 - cut red tape
 - market Cluster 10 as a desirable/competitive jobs location
 - give residents/stakeholders a voice in job-related development planning and decisions

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This organization should also work with corporations and institutions already based in the area to:

- encourage job expansion
- collaborate in developing job training programs for area residents
- promote the hiring of area residents
- cooperate in improving the area housing stock to provide close-to-work living opportunities for employees
- collaborate with other programs/businesses to provide affordable, quality daycare

Ensure that this business development coalition works with, and is governed by, Cluster residents and business owners and addresses both neighborhood commercial and job-related development issues/initiatives.

3. Give high priority to supporting existing, and developing new, job training and retraining centers in the Cluster to serve area and City residents by:
 - supporting the expansion of Focus Hope and its training programs in skilled manufacturing trades and technology
 - developing partnerships with area educational institutions and businesses to design and implement training programs, provide on-the-job apprenticeships and give job training graduates a direct link to employers/employment
 - developing, and seeking funding for, training and apprenticeship programs in housing repair, rehab and new construction, working in partnership with private companies/contractors and non-profit programs (such as Habitat for Humanity)
 - developing technical support programs and incubator facilities to facilitate small retail and service business start-ups

Locations

4. Concentrate efforts to assemble and re-market land to attract manufacturing, skilled trades and technology employers in:
 - the area south of Bourke between Livernois and Linwood
 - between the Lodge and Oakman Boulevard adjacent to Focus Hope (Note: This could include the expansion of Focus Hope, itself.)
 - east of Woodrow Wilson

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5. Collaborate with University of Detroit Mercy to develop a university-supported small business incubator center located on the west side of Livernois and linked to U of D's Business degree program. Design this incubator center to:
 - provide low cost space, shared support facilities (i.e., conference rooms, clerical) and technical support to start-up office and retail businesses
 - include university-related retail space (copy center; book store; etc.)
 - incorporate streetscape improvements on Livernois to facilitate pedestrian crossings (boulevard cross section; cross walks; street trees; etc.)
6. Explore the feasibility of locating a skilled construction trades training center in the industrially zoned area north of Oakman Boulevard.

Transportation

Transit

1. Improve public transit as a high priority transportation-related investment in Cluster 10.
 - Maintain existing routes/service and significantly improve frequency and speed of service between the suburbs and downtown on the City's major radials (including Woodward Avenue in Cluster 10); explore the feasibility of light rail in developing an improved regional transit system.
 - Expand routes/service within the Cluster to serve major educational, employment and shopping locations; encourage major employers, educational institutions and area merchants' associations to participate in funding such a local shuttle service.
 - Improve lighting and provide public or emergency telephones to enhance the security of bus stops; improve bus stop maintenance.
2. Encourage the formation of vanpools by major employers and non-profits as an alternative means of getting to work, getting seniors to shopping and/or young people to schools and recreation centers.

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Road Conditions

3. Coordinate street repaving/improvement projects with investments in jobs, housing and neighborhood commercial target areas. Give highest priority to improving pavement conditions on major through streets to divert traffic from residential streets.
4. Involve citizens in the process of setting City priorities for roadway improvement projects and planning for any changes in street patterns.
5. Improve road conditions using a higher quality pavement standard for greater durability and improved cost effectiveness.
6. Redesign certain residential and non-residential streets to discourage high volumes of through traffic using a range of "traffic calming" techniques (e.g., on-street parking; reduction in number of traffic lanes; boulevarding, installation of an increased number of stop signs and/or traffic signals, speed bumps). Give special attention to:
 - Livernois
 - 7 Mile from Wyoming to the Lodge
 - the areas around schools
 - Puritan, Fenkell, Dexter and Linwood
 - Meyers

Auto Insurance

7. Ask the City to take the lead in developing a city-wide strategy for reducing auto insurance rates.
 - Identify and independently measure those factors which contribute to higher rates
 - Reduce the incidence of those factors (e.g., unrecovered auto thefts, accident rates, roadway pavement quality)
 - Ask for/increase City representation on the State Insurance Commission
 - Investigate the feasibility of alternative methods for providing reduced cost insurance for City residents

Truck Traffic

8. Control truck traffic on residential and neighborhood commercial streets (especially Meyers, 7 Mile and Dexter) by:
 - providing better enforcement of existing restrictions on truck traffic
 - reviewing the costs and benefits of the existing ordinance prohibiting City designation and enforcement of truck routes; revise ordinance as necessary.

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Environment

Contaminated Sites; Pollution

1. Initiate a public education/awareness campaign to assist residents/stakeholders in recognizing, preventing, reporting and reducing environmental problems (including air and noise pollution) within the Cluster.
 - Increase enforcement capability of responsible agencies/city departments.

Dumping, Junked Cars, Vacant Lots

2. Strengthen City capacity to enforce existing laws and regulations designed to prevent illegal dumping and junked and inappropriately stored vehicles and to ensure maintenance of vacant lots.
 - Educate stakeholders on laws and regulations through community organizations
 - Increase City capacity to enforce laws and regulations; train and "deputize" stakeholders to ticket violators
 - Provide equal levels of enforcement in all neighborhoods (regardless of degree of community activism)
3. Speed the transfer of vacant lots to adjacent property owners and/or area non-profits who can take responsibility for maintenance.
 - Maintain and provide an up-to-date inventory of city-owned vacant lots.

Greening/ Appearance

4. Provide funding for streetscape improvements to:
 - Create major landscaped gateways on Livernois at the Lodge and at 8 Mile
 - Create minor gateways on 8 Mile at Schaefer, Meyers and Wyoming
 - Establish a boulevard treatment on Livernois
 - Improve landscaping on 7 Mile to establish a visual link to Palmer Park (which may also include sidewalk improvements and the addition of a signed on-street or sidewalk bike route)
 - Provide bike route signs along residential streets linking smaller parks within the Cluster.

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5. Improve maintenance and make more efficient use (including expanded programming) of parks, playgrounds and school sites by establishing a partnership between the City Department of Parks and Recreation and the Detroit Public Schools. Provide additional small parks and tot lots, possibly on school grounds or vacant lots.
6. Educate stakeholders on regulations related to trash collection and bulk pick ups, and increase enforcement of existing ordinances, to reduce negative impacts on area appearance.
7. Institute a government sponsored recycling program.
8. Encourage community organizations to provide entry signs to reinforce neighborhood identity, pride and sense of ownership.
 - Share information on fundraising strategies and design guidelines consistent with City ordinances.
9. Revise the City's sign ordinance to reduce visual clutter and create a more consistent and attractive image on commercial strips/ frontages.

Youth And Family Development

Multipurpose Centers

1. Explore sources of support for establishing a multipurpose center (using an existing recreation center, if possible) serving both youth and adults and providing a one-stop location for recreation activities, daycare, legal aid, drug and/or family counseling, parenting programs, etc.

Program Information and Outreach

2. Establish a Youth Hotline to improve the dissemination of information on available educational, enrichment, counseling and job training programs available to Cluster youth.

Public Schools

3. Improve the quality of the public schools' educational programs/ curricula by:
 - Implementing a community schools model (where the school serves as a focus of community activity before and after school hours)
 - Creating an attitude of partnership between schools and area residents and businesses

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4. Investigate sources of public, private and non-profit funding which may be available to extend open hours for schools and staffing for programs to supplement the basic curriculum (e.g., a set aside from casino revenues to Parks and Recreation for programs based at schools and other sites). Work with the public school and city administration to develop support for such a program.
5. Promote cooperation between the Detroit Public Schools and the City to make more effective use of public schools sites to improve the geographic distribution of recreation facilities and programs throughout the Cluster.

Recreation

6. **Develop/expand partnerships with local institutions of higher education to extend hours of availability for youth activity sites, expand youth programming and improve outreach. Seek funding to support expanded community use.**
7. Increase the number of parks and playgrounds in the Cluster.
8. Increase funding to improve Tindell and Johnson Recreation Centers (buildings, parking lots, surrounding sites).
9. Develop/expand partnership programs through which businesses, corporations, organizations and individuals "adopt" parks, libraries, and other recreational and cultural facilities to provide physical improvements, enhanced maintenance and expanded programs.

Other

10. Develop "life skills" and job training programs to serve area youth through educational, business, church and community group partnerships.
11. Seek increased resources to support early childhood education and expand daycare opportunities.
12. Expand resources and improve program outreach in serving seniors within the Cluster.
13. Encourage foundations to collaborate in creating a funding "pool" to allow streamlined grant application procedures for youth/family development program funding.

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14. Maximize the use of existing health services in the Cluster to expand health promotion and substance abuse prevention programs. Expand marketing of these programs to schools, churches and families.